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## **THE GENIUS OF SPORTS IN JAMAICA**

Active sports enthusiasts find great facilities in Jamaica, with a wide range of choices. The island's natural beauty provides breathtakingly scenic settings, and the moderate climate ensures year-round activity.

**Golf** in Jamaica attracts players from around the world, who come for the superior club facilities, diversely challenging greens and spectacular settings.

There are 12 courses on the island:

- Caymanas Golf Club near Kingston
- Cinnamon Hill Golf Course in Rose Hall, Montego Bay
- Constant Spring Golf Club in Kingston
- Grand Lido Braco Golf Club in Negril
- Half Moon Golf Club in Montego Bay
- Manchester Club in Mandeville
- Negril Hill Golf Club
- Sandals Golf & Country Club in Ocho Rios
- SuperClubs Breezes Golf Club, Runaway Bay
- SuperClubs Golf Club, Ironshore
- Tryall Golf Club in Montego Bay
- White Witch Golf Club in Montego Bay

Additionally, San San Golf & Country Club is currently being developed, and will offer seclusion and privacy in an exclusive Port Antonio setting.

**Cricket** is not just a sport but a passion throughout the West Indies, whose teams are among the best in the world. Major matches are held at Sabina Park in Kingston.

A successful addition to the sporting calendar, the **Negril Reggae Marathon and Half Marathon** has been an annual event since 2000. Held in December, with inspirational reggae music at every mile of the marathon, this activity is enhanced with pre-event social gatherings that include a pasta party and a village “bash” party.

**Water sports** are always an island favorite, and here include scuba diving, waterskiing, windsurfing, sailing, yachting, rafting and kayaking. From the coral caves, tunnels and steep canyons of the famous Airport Reef off Montego Bay to the calm crystalline coves of Negril, this is truly a diving island. Great sites to explore are near the old pirate capital of Port Royal, close to Kingston’s airport, a section of which sank into the sea after an earthquake in 1692. Numerous nearby shipwrecks provide a haven for a dense array of fish and other underwater life. Some of the best reefs are found here, too, with small cays separated by clear water no deeper than 50 feet (15 meters) and an outer reef with a challenging drop-off point of 80 feet (24 meters).

There are dozens of licensed diving centers around the island, including the Buccaneer Scuba Club at Morgan’s Harbour Hotel in Port Royal, and the Negril Scuba Centre at the Negril Beach Club, which offers a wide variety of diving packages for both novice and certified divers. Recommended operators also include Lady G’Diver in Port Antonio, and Seaworld and Jamaqua, both of which provide diving instruction and packages at resorts in the Runaway Bay/Montego Bay area. The Jamaica Association of Dive Operators, based in Montego Bay, can recommend others.

**Swimming with dolphins** is an extraordinary experience with great appeal to all ages. Several organizations, including Half Moon and Dolphin’s Cove, train dolphins in pairs, and visitors can choose to swim with these amazing creatures; or to stand in the water and watch the action; or to view the antics from dry land.

**Waterfall climbing** in Jamaica is always fun, and made safe by professional guides who escort climbers in small, closely monitored groups. The best spots are Dunns River Falls, YS Falls, Somerset Falls and Mayfield Falls.

**Deep-sea fishing** opportunities are excellent here, with blue marlin the prime catch. Wahoo, tuna and dolphin also swim these waters, just 15 minutes beyond the reefs. Fully-equipped crewed boats are readily available in Montego Bay and Ocho Rios as well as Port Antonio, where the International Marlin Tournament is held every October.

**River rafting** is available with several organizations along scenic waterways that include the Martha Brae River and the Great River, both in the Montego Bay area; the White River, in Ocho Rios; and the Rio Grande River, close to Port Antonio. Excursions include Mountain Valley Rafting's Evening on the Great River (dinner included); Calypso Rafting's voyage down the rapids of the White River; and Rafting on the Rio Grande's two-and-a-half-hour journey that begins at Rafter's Rest in St. Margaret's Bay and slowly meanders past banana plantations. Bamboo rafts are usually built for two and poled by an expert guide.

**Hiking** trails range from gentle to challenging, and are exceptionally scenic in the Blue Mountains, the Rio Grande Valley and on Oatley Mountain.

**Tennis** facilities are offered by most resort properties. Many courts are lit for night play, and professional instruction is available around the island.

**Horseback riding** is offered by riding schools and stables all over the island. Excellent facilities are available through Rocky Point Riding Stables and Country Western Riding Stables. Chukka Blue and Chukka Cove offer escorted scenic rides on nearby beaches where riders gallop through the surf; Chukka Cove also offers polo lessons and instruction in dressage and show-jumping. Good Hope

Plantation, in the hills behind Falmouth, organizes all-day riding expeditions through leafy trails leading to remote waterfalls and hidden valleys.

**A day at the races** is always fun at Caymanas Race Track in Kingston, with meets held every Wednesday and Saturday afternoon and on most public holidays. In March, visitors can also attend the annual polo tournament sponsored by the Jamaica Polo Association at the Chukka Cove Equestrian Center, near Runaway Bay.

**Island safaris** in sturdy jeeps take visitors through diverse terrain, including rain forest and mountainside. In the Black River area tours are offered by several organizations, including Chukka Blue and Black River Tours.

Chukka Blue and Chukka Cove also offer **all-terrain vehicle (ATV) tours**, plus **canopy tours**, which take participants through the Jamaican rainforest using "zip lines" across the treetops. The canopy tours feature an intricate harness system of pulleys on horizontal traverse cables, supervised by experienced guides, allowing participants to swing up to 50 yards (45 meters) between platforms high in the trees at leaf level.

**Caving** expeditions are available with Nonsuch in Port Antonio, Green Grotto in Runaway Bay, and at Quashie River Sink in Trelawny.

**Cliff diving** is not for the faint of heart, and the high points in Negril attract the most daring of divers. A favorite spot is Rick's Café, where local athletes dive for tips, and brave visitors test their skills.

### **Jamaica as International Host**

The island has successfully hosted a number of world sporting events, including:

- The eighth Commonwealth Games in 1966 at the National Stadium in Kingston. (This was the first time the Games were held in a destination other than a major Commonwealth country.)
- The 2002 IAAF World Junior Championships in Athletics.

- The 2003 World Netball Championships.
- The 2003 Celebrity Players Golf Tournament.

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